Harold Weisberg 12/22/68

Lee Harvey Oswald's use of the address 544 Camp St., New Orleans
Government secrecy and suppression

Paul Koch, a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, has been conducting a study of the murder of President John Kennedy and its official investigation. He has been interested in Oswald's picketing and use of the address 544 Camp St. in New Orleans. When he finally decided that through the usual channels the government would not provide him with a copy of one of the publicly-available items Oswald gave the FBI when Oswald was arrested in New Orleans August 9, 1963, three and a half months before the assassination, on February 19, 1968, Koch invoked the "Freedom of Information" Act. He supplied the Department of Justice with the requisite forms and papers properly executed and accompanied by the proper cash advance, ~~under date of February 19, 1968.~~ After more than 10 months and 18 pages of needless correspondence, he still has only part of an answer. Had he not been persistent and seen through the evasions of the Department of Justice, including a Deputy Attorney General, he would have been deceived, lead to believe what is not true, and would have lacked even the part of an answer he finally elicited.

To begin with, the Department of Justice attempted to hide from him the fact that Oswald, to its knowledge, three and a half months before the murder, was using a return address that had been that of an organization created and funded by the CIA, the Cuban Revolutionary Council. Although the Department of Justice, especially the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which acted as the investigative staff of the Warren Commission, was aware of it, this small building has a side entrance on Lafayette St. In this same building and using the side address was a detective agency operated by a man once famous in the FBI, then enjoying the best relations with it, and reputedly connected with it and other government investigative agencies at that time. He is also known to have been an associate of the late David W. Ferrie, who was often seen in his company and in his offices, was reported to have been seen with Oswald, was a violent racist,

and was the associate and helper of the man who then was in charge of the New

Orleans office of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, Sergio Arcacha Smith. In fact, although the Federal Bureau of Investigation knew it and carefully withheld its knowledge from the Warren Commission, this same man, the late Guy Banister, actually arranged for the office space used by the Cuban Revolutionary Council at 544 Camp St., the address Oswald also used as a return address on his literature.

Koch was aware that the FBI had not informed the Warren Commission of the significance of the Oswald use of the address 544 Camp St., for I had brought it to public attention in my book, OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS and had given him copies of the unpublished FBI reports disclosing this deception. Among his purposes was establishing that, in fact, from August 1963, three and a half months prior to the Presidential murder, the FBI did know of this Oswald association and whether, in fact, it had actually withheld the proof of its knowledge from the Warren Commission. Nowhere in the Warren Report, the 26 expended volumes of so-called evidence, or the organized chaos of the enormous store of official documents deposited in the National Archives, ~~has~~ have Koch or ~~anyone else, including me,~~ I been able to locate any indication of any real FBI investigation, before or after the assassination, of Oswald's use of the address of the CIA-organized and funded groups or of its relationship with Banister or of the known use, by the same people, of Banister's office after the Cuban Revolutionary Council surrendered its office space. There is the shallowest pretense of an investigation, by New Orleans FBI Agent Ernest G. Hall, Jr., on one occasion assisted by SA Lawrence F. ~~Hall~~ Folse, conducted November 25, 1963, ~~conducted~~ the third day after the President's murder. It amounts to a deliberate deception and pretends Banister's office is elsewhere than in the 544 Camp St. Building and that he did not have the known association with Arcacha and others

With the FBI having failed to conduct this investigation so urgently required of it before the assassination or when it was investigating the assassination, the Department of Justice now admits that it is withholding this pamphlet voluntarily given it by Oswald from the public which is entitled to it on the ground that it is now conducting an investigation. ~~=~~ the ground specified on

behalf of the Attorney General by James T. Devine, assistant to Deputy Attorney General Warren Christopher, in writing, under date of November 8, 1964. He did not make this admission voluntarily. Nor did he make it promptly. When, after ~~more than~~ seven months, Hoch still had no meaningful responses, in an effort to learn the truth he submitted a number of possibilities to Devine, under date of September 13, 1968. One of these asked, "Am I correct in assuming that your position is that, since it is in the 'investigative files' it is exempt from public disclosure under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 522(b)?" (This is the "Freedom of Information" Act.) On October 27 Hoch reminded Devine he had not responded. Not until November 8 did he. He then said, "Your assumption is correct."

~~In these same letter he~~ The Dept. of Justice had sought to avoid acknowledging that this suppressed pamphlet bore the suppressed address, 544 Camp St. added by a rubber stamp. Hoch, finally ~~forced to a pointed question~~, asked, "I am specifically asking you to advise me exactly what stamped impression, if any, appears on page 33 (or any other page) of the pamphlet obtained by Mr Quigley..." and he asked if it were 544 Camp St. Devine finally conceded it did "contain the rubber stamped impression: FPCC, 544 Camp St., New Orleans, La."

Thus we have the Attorney General and the Department of Justice first misleading and denying information to the Warren Commission, then attempting to deceive and deny ~~him~~ information to concerned citizens, ~~them~~ This information was vital to the conduct of any investigation of the President's murder. Having failed itself to conduct the investigation with which it was charged and of which it knew the essential fact without special investigation - ~~has~~ engaged in a coverup - ~~and~~ now withholding the ~~information, as required by law,~~ evidence the Dept. of Justice is on the spurious ground it is conducting an investigation.